

September 2020 Mini-Messenger

Pastor Pat:

You're probably wondering, "What happened to our fancy newsletter!?" It's not colorful! It's not pretty! It's just... words! Well, I'll tell you. I've never had lessons in newsletter production, even in seminary, where it was possibly something that should have been taught to those pastors whose letter of call included tasks such as this, along with bulletin preparations and all the other things an office admin/secretary takes care of in churches fortunate enough to have them on staff. I've been blessed in 32 years of ministry to always have an office administrator on hand... until now. I'm growing to appreciate all the folks that undertake that position as I answer doorbells, phone calls, emails, prayer requests at greater levels than I've ever had to before. That will, soon, be remedied. Even now we are in the process of interviewing candidates for our open position, and believe me – to me, it's urgent!

In the meantime we continue ahead with our Healthy Churches Thrive endeavor, about which you will read more in this "mini-Messenger." After our report from Church Doctors Director Tracee Swank in July, we hit the ground running undertaking next steps and tasks. I'm thrilled with the response we've had from leaders in the congregation as they undertake the various items as we prepare to respond to Tracee's report and continue in this renewal process.

It's called "Healthy Churches Thrive," and while it's all pretty much a new process, it amazes me how much the Holy Spirit has already prepared us along the way for this. To me, it's really a continuation of "Forward in Faith," an outgrowth of that process we began in 2015 with the major focus on refurbishing Luther Hall. With the excellent work done in that process, your exuberant participation, and a wonderful outcome, it feels like we already laid the groundwork for what lies before us now.

As I write this, I am painfully aware of the fact that we cannot meet as a church on Sunday morning. The option does exist to hold worship services outside, with numerous safety procedures in place for up to 60 people, however, since our congregation is mostly made up of those who are in a more tenuous age bracket, including your pastor (!), we have felt it wise to refrain from meeting together as of yet. That's painful for us, and for me personally. There have been many instances in the past months that I felt it important to be present to people going through crises, while the directions we receive from those in authority have prohibited just that. As our people suffer loss, health and surgical issues, family crisis, and difficult decisions, we have prayed heartfelt prayers from a distance, knowing that God is present to all of us through this time and circumstance. And I know it works, but it isn't how I'd like it to be – anyone feel that way too?

We look toward the time when we may all be back together again, prayerfully sooner than later. In the meantime, know that you are loved and cared for, that united in purpose and moving "Forward in Faith" even in these trying times we can work at being a "Healthy Church Thriving." May God bless you all!

p.s. and I promise, next month's Messenger will look a whole lot better than this!

Power to you!

Pastor Pat

Healthy Churches Thrive - The Next Chapter In A Great Story

Eons ago a story began. Like any wonderful story worth retelling, it began with a relationship, a romance, promises exchanged and then promises broken. God created us for relationship with Him but we turned away. As the story progresses there are more ups and downs in this relationship, wonderful reunions and bitter betrayals (by God's people). Then God sets forth his Son to wipe away the burden of sin and death

so we may return to him with glad hearts and start living lives full of his promise. Thousands, millions came to hear the story and be part of its making - weaving their lives with HIS. On August 1, 1954, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church was founded, sharing and continuing the story of God's Grace and Redeeming presence in our lives. Reaching out into the community, Gloria Dei invited thousands to join in the story and be a part of God's Kingdom, helping to grow and send members to share the Good News.

We continue the story today in 2020. The community around us has changed and the names in the Church Directory are not the same, but our purpose has not wavered; however, we face many new challenges as we strive to share God's love at 121 South White Road. So we invited Church Doctors and their Healthy Church's Thrive Ministry to help us.

In February, Tracee Swank travelled to Gloria Dei from her home in Ohio for an onsite evaluation and visit. She explored our campus and our community and interviewed many members of the congregation. Shortly after this visit, a new challenge arose as we began dealing with COVID-19 - a pandemic which caused us to reinvent how we worship and made consultation with Tracee and her team at Church Doctor's nearly impossible. We waited anxiously to hear her team's results and recommendations. However, as with every wonderful story and everything blessed by God, this was not the end.

On July 27th, Tracee was able to share the findings from her visit. We learned that like many congregations, our numbers had decreased as our age increased. We learned that our corner of White and Rose posed many challenges but also offered terrific opportunities. We learned that years of attending small groups, and listening to the Word had grown us spiritually and endowed us with an abundance of gifts ready to continue God's Work here at Gloria Dei.

Now we start the next chapter of Gloria Dei's part of His Story. With report in hand, an **Action Plan Task Force** has been created. This team's volunteers are Libby Nelson, Pastor Pat, Ben Tobin, Joyce Boddie, Jon Kromrey and myself, Wendy Kromrey. This team is looking at the recommendations in the Church Doctor's Report. As this team prayerfully considers each suggestion, we work to create a **three-year plan** of community outreach and growth for Gloria Dei. We also seek individuals with the spiritual gifts and talents to help us write these plans. We have started creating plans to improve the safety and appearance of our church. We are examining our Health Ministries and finding ways to reach more people and finding resources to support what we already do. We are also working on plans to reach visitors who simply stop to rest under our tree or are here to visit the food pantry and preschool. Ann Fitzgerald is crafting a prayer team and ministry to support the Action Plan Task Force and the planning process as well as all members and ministries of Gloria Dei. Always we pray and seek what God's purpose is for Gloria Dei. For just as God's Church has people with many different gifts and talents, so each church is uniquely equipped and has a unique part to play for God's purpose in this place.

If you have taken part in **the Spiritual Gifts Study and Survey**, please send a list of your spiritual gifts to wkromrey5@gmail.com. Sending this list will NOT obligate you to any volunteer position or request. This information will simply help us understand the spiritual shape of our congregation and where our spiritual strengths lie as we look to our future. If you wish to see the report from Church Doctor's a PDF can be emailed to you or you may borrow a paper copy from the church office. Please contact the Church Office by phone (408) 729-7563 or email Gdlcsj.office@gmail.com for a copy.

I ask you now, to pray for God's Wisdom and purpose as we move forward into an exciting new chapter of this story, our story, His Story.

Yours In Christ,
Wendy Kromrey
Action Plan Task Force Leader

Church Doctors Purpose: Prayer

PURPOSE: Jesus commanded his disciples, his church to “go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” “Make disciples that make disciples.”

But before He sent his disciples, he walked with them and taught them about the kingdom and revealed to them the truth that He was indeed God and had come to fulfill the law through his death and to show them that he had risen from the dead. He called people to himself and gave life to all who followed in his way. Before the disciples could tell the world about Jesus they had to know and believe all he had taught them. Before the world could hear the good news, the disciples had to gather under one purpose and pray with one another. And before this unity of prayer could take place each had to know Christ, to believe in Him and make a commitment to follow.

And so, it is with Gloria Dei. This is an important, no, vital, piece of any church which wants to reach out into the community with the living Word of God. When we go into our community by our power alone, with little commitment to God and with poorly nurtured spirit, then we can offer no more to people than what they already get from this world.

The 1st step in any endeavor of a healthy church is to gather in unity to seek God’s direction and power. The prayer of a healthy church grows out of the living faith of individuals committed to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit dedicated to spiritual growth through daily prayer and scripture.

As I write these words I squirm under the burden of seemingly overwhelming expectations. I wonder if my readers have moved on after rolling their eyes and getting a cup of coffee or to go for a walk. How do I put into words the importance of a relationship with a living, loving and laughing God into a mere 2-dimensional document with a pen that skips? This is impossible because Jesus does not exist on paper but rather breathes life into the heart of every believer. I can only tell you my own story and pray that God will tell you the rest.

Living, Laughing Waters by Ann Fitzgerald

How can I tell people why I follow Jesus? How can I live my life that reflects the mercy of God?

How can I lead others when I do not follow in the steps of my Savior? And how can I follow in the steps set by the Holy Spirit? I cannot write the words to tell the story of my relationship with Jesus Christ, I can only introduce him to you.

I think ‘how’ is not the question.

Follow me – Come and see – Pick up your cross and follow.

Words in ink on yellowed page like dry bread without water.

*I am the bread of life, I am the living water
take, eat, this is my body, drink the wine, it is my blood.
For you I died.*

Spilled blood, lifeless flesh, words on a yellowed page. Lives ruled by earthly law.

This dryness of my soul like the dryness of my mouth leaves my life unlived.

Words lost in the chaos of this world’s demands

Tears in the dust go unnoticed by a world of poisoned air and plumes of smoke,
Of humanity and hatred, against God and man. GOD?

Dry bread, tears in the dust
Heart of man, lifeless now dull

Who am I? Who is God?

Life, like soft laughter faintly heard. Distant water beginning to flow

The smallest trickle of an underground spring

Rises like a baby's laugh or angel's song.

And then...

A river explodes filling the canyons carved in sand.

Laughing living waters bursting the rock where Jesus was laid,

burst the stone that blocked the light

and Jesus laughed or sang.. or maybe painted a picture

the thing is he was alive, fully alive.

The living water that opened the door of a tomb

Opened the door of my heart

My heart, once dead and now alive

Living water, living bread, laughing, dancing joy filled Spirit

Calls to me calls to me in the day come and follow me.

How can I refuse such an invitation as this? But to follow

-with lively step to the ends of the earth and back again.

My light, My laughter, springs with life

Living word, written not on yellowed page

But inscribed on the hearts of those who call him LORD.

Leadership Team Corner -September 2020:

Leadership Team Meeting was held on August 18, 2020. Here are some highlights:

Healthy Churches Thrive- Wendy Kromrey has begun using the Servant Keeper software for information on Spiritual Gifts. Please make sure you send your Spiritual Gifts form to her.

The Prayer Team and Action Plan Taskforce have begun to meet. The Action Plan Taskforce is working on recommendations for Outreach and Buildings and Grounds/Security.

Solar Project- Progress is moving slowly, but it's moving. Santa Clara County requires that new solar systems must be placed on roofs less than 5 years old. Roofing bids were submitted for re-roofing the peaked portions of Luther Hall and the ELC. K-12 recommended a proposal from ACME Roofing for \$21,500 (not including gutters) be accepted. K-12 provided information on a Loan Program sponsored by the County for Energy Saving Devices. The Team discussed possible alternatives to this and by consensus agreed to use Church Savings to pay for the roof replacement.

ELC- The staff is preparing for the Fall. They are expecting at least 11 students. Things look promising for the next school year.

Playground improvements are on the agenda- seeking a grant to pay for these. Still hoping this will happen.

Fencing around the front of the ELC building – The fencing was nearly complete on Tuesday the 18th. It is expected to be done soon.

Lord's Pantry- Business continues to be brisk. There is a good flow of food from Second Harvest and other providers. The Clothes Closet is temporarily closed due to an insect infestation and when it reopens, will have limitations on accepting clothes. Volunteers are currently adequate. The Board Meeting to be held next week.

Parish Nurse –In May, Donna served over 100+individuals through home visits, and many phone calls. She even does Convalescent Home visits, through the windows. She continues to deliver Brown Bag program food to several of our shut-ins. Her Health Ministry Corner articles are sent out by Constant Contact each week. GDLG Finances/Budget – As the shelter in place order continues, we are maintaining the normal salaries and benefits for our employees and staff. Our income is stable and doing reasonably well. Members are encouraged to use the “digital” platforms to make their tithes and offerings. If you need help with any of the plans, feel free to contact Dan Rinerson, who can help!

Worship Activities- Group Studies will resume the first week of August. We’re planning to do “drive through” communion the first Sunday of each month.

No change in sight for a return to normal Worship Services, but we’ll let you know as things change. The IMDC has begun having outdoor services on Sundays following all the County requirements (temperatures, size, space requirements).

Our delightful Office Administrator, Stacey Dier, moved in late July. We have been advertising for another Administrator on CraigsList and other websites and will have received some resumes. We will begin interviewing soon. If you know someone who is looking for this type of position, please let Libby know (408-594-5857).

HEALTH MINISTRY CORNER Donna Zimmerman, RN Parish Nurse

Numbers 11:5

We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

The following information is from the website:

September is Fruit and Veggie Month.

Given the considerable amount of time most employees spend at work, the foods they eat during the workday play a vital role in their overall nutrition and health. Think about the eating habits you notice among employees in the breakroom or work stations.

It might make you feel strange about the thought of eating fruits and veggies according to the months. But, in reality these months (August-September) includes a growing season and one must therefore consume these fruits and veggies for better health (In short, to stay disease-free).

What fruits and vegetables are in September?

Even with the summer coming to a close and the beginning of fall on the horizon, there’s still a lot of delicious produce to choose from. September is well-known for its bounty of apples, but don’t forget to stock up on bell peppers, green beans, and Bartlett pears.

Fruits and vegetables in season in September: chard, cauliflower, white cabbage, Savoycabbage, cucumber, chicory, onion, bean, mushroom, lettuce, laeggplant, nettle, pota to, tomato, pepper, rhubarb, radish, rocket, shallot, zucchini and pumpkin...

The month of September offers these other health topic observances:

Childhood Cancer Month, Fruit & Veggies Month, Healthy Aging Month; Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month, National Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month, National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, National Cholesterol Education Month. National Yoga Awareness Month, National Pediculosis (Head lice) Prevention

Month., National Sickle Cell Month, National ITP Awareness Month, Newborn Screening Awareness Month, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, & Whole Grains Month.

Health Sunday is September 6. Usually on the first Sunday each month, blood pressure screening is offered in the Fellowship Hall after the service. During this Covid epidemic we are not yet allowed to gather so we have not done them for several months and it is unclear when it will happen again. It may be a while yet.

News from the Early Learning Center:

Dear Families,

I hope this note finds you all safe and well. As you know schools have started up again, whether it be virtual or in class.

We here at Gloria Dei Early Learning Center are getting ready to begin on September 1st. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic we are only allowed to accept 12 students. At this time we have 8 confirmed to begin. We hope that this will change soon. Last school year, right before the pandemic hit we were at 24 students and going strong!

If you know of any families that are looking for a preschool, we are here for them. Rest assure we are taking the necessary precautions to sanitize and disinfect our classroom daily to keep our staff and children safe.

In order to continue keeping our facility clean, if you are able to spare any disinfecting wipes and/or sprays, non-powdered, latex free gloves that would be wonderful. We are also looking for any preschool books, yarn (any color), paper clips, pens, pencils, erasers, file folders, 8 1/2 x 11 laminating pouches, white card stock paper and white copier paper. We would greatly appreciate it. One of our parents thought it would be great to set up an Amazon wish list. I have attached the link if you prefer to shop online. I have set it up so the items get shipped directly to me to make things easier.

[Check out my list on Amazon](#)

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/112ZLSUOLR6UR?ref=wl_share

Thank you so much for your continued support and please feel free to contact me anytime.

Please feel free to pass along my information here at the school:

Gloria Dei Early Learning Center

121 S. White Road

San Jose, CA 95127

408-272-0321

gdelcdirector@yahoo.com

Kind regards,

Maria Nugent

GDELC Director

Church Office 'Contact' Information:

Phone: 408-729-7563

Pastor Pat Fitzgerald email: pastorpatgdlc@comcast.net

gdlcsj.office@gmail.com

Website: www.gdlcsj.com

Sunday, 9:30 a.m. *Worship Service*, at this time, is being livestreamed online at:

GDLC [Facebook Page](#) and/or [YouTube Page](#)